Using the Bird's Nest Drawing to Predict Attachment Style in Adult Children of Alcoholics

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ALBERTUS MAGNUS COLLEGE

We have faith in your future.

DATE: April 5, 2024

TO: Francesca Mascola
FROM: Albertus Magnus College Institutional Review Board
PROJECT TITLE: Using the Bird's Nest Drawing to Predict Attachment Styles in Adult Children of Alcoholics
IRB ID Number: 202324-009

SUBMISSION TYPE: Revised
DECISION: Approved
ACTION: COMPLETE

Dear Francesca Mascola:
The Albertus Magnus College Institutional Review Board (AMCIRB) by Expedited Review has considered the Revised submission for the project referenced above. Following this review, the AMCIRB has **Approved** this study, from 2/7/2024 to 2/7/2025.

Research activities (including screening, new recruitment, follow-up, and continued participation of enrolled participants) that have been approved may not be conducted beyond the expiration date stated above unless a continuation/renewal is requested and approved by the IRB.

If you have any questions, contact the AMCIRB at irb@albertus.edu . Please include your project title and IRB Project Number in all correspondence with the IRB.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Albertus Magnus College Institutional Review Board's records.

Abstract

The present study investigated the validity of the Bird's Nest Drawing (BND) art-based assessment (Kaiser, 1996) as a measure for attachment style with a sample of adult children of alcoholics (ACOA). The Revised Adult Attachment Scale - Close Relationships Version (RAAS-CRV; Collins, 1996) was used in comparison with the BND. A combination of convenience and snowball sampling was used to recruit 28 participants who self-identified as ACOAs. The researcher developed a rating manual to score the BND assessment and trained four art therapy professionals to rate the drawings utilizing the manual. For the present study, attachment style was viewed through a continuous lens, and a MANOVA analysis was used to determine if there was a relationship between the graphic indicators present in the participant's BND and the participant's attachment style scores on the RAAS-CRV. The researcher had hypothesized that there would be a statistically significant relationship between the graphic indicators found in the BND assessment and an insecure attachment style score; however, the results yielded no statistically significant relationship between the four graphic indicators in the BND and the anxious and avoidant subscales on the RAAS-CRV. The purpose of this study was to add to the existing literature regarding the effects of parental alcoholism on adult children and contribute to the research on utilizing projective art techniques in the field of art therapy.

Using the Bird's Nest Drawing to Predict Attachment Style in Adult Children of Alcoholics

Considerable research has been carried out on alcoholism (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2013; Cutten, 1907; Harper & Kril, 1990; Harris, 2008; Miller et al., 2001; National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, 2023): the causes, the impacts, and treatments, but only in recent years have researchers begun to investigate the families of alcoholics and, more specifically, the children of these families. Children who have grown up living in a home where one or both parents are alcoholics are subject to long-lasting emotional and psychological scars (Hill et al., 1997; Mahato et al., 2009; Sher et al., 1991; Thapa et al., 2017; Williams & Corrigan, 1992; Wood, 1987). Children of alcoholics may have more difficulty with effective communication and developing healthy intimate relationships as they age into adulthood than non-children of alcoholics (Beesley & Stoltenberg, 2002; Harrington & Metzler, 1997; Haverfield & Theiss, 2014; Kearns-Bodkin & Leonard, 2008; Windle, 1996).

How humans create and establish relationships with others is defined as attachment behavior (Ainsworth, 1989; Bowlby, 1989). Attachment theory explains that forming attachments is an innate human instinct that begins in infancy with early caregiving experiences that later inform one's attachment behaviors as we move beyond infancy into adolescence and adulthood (Ainsworth, 1989; Bowlby, 1989). Patterns of attachment are believed to be closely related to the behavior of the primary attachment figure; thus, the unpredictable nature and inconsistency of an alcoholic parent may harm the development of secure attachment behaviors in their children (Windle, 1996). Research has found that responsive and sensitive attachment figures tend to elicit healthy and secure attachment behaviors, whereas inaccessible or unpredictable attachment figures typically provoke the development of insecure or anxious attachment patterns (Ainsworth, 1989; Crittenden & Ainsworth, 1989). Researchers have

developed several measures to assess an individual's attachment style, yet almost all rely on self-reporting (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Fraley et al., 2000; Hazen & Shaver, 1987).

Although self-reporting measures can be found useful and practical for gathering data, topics that involve underlying emotional issues, such as one's internalizations of how to relate and connect with others, can be challenging to evaluate with certainty. The foundational theories of art therapy describe art as a visual expression of our unconscious thoughts and emotions and a mode of symbolic communication (Handler & Thomas, 2013; Naumburg, 1958). Therefore, drawing tasks and projective arts-based assessments can be valuable instruments for art therapists as screenings or diagnostic tools. Art therapist Donna Kaiser (1996) proposed an arts-based assessment that could elicit graphic indicators of secure or insecure attachment styles through the symbolic depiction of a bird's nest. Several studies have researched the use of the Bird's Nest Drawing (BND; Kaiser, 1996) with substance abuse populations, yet very few have evaluated the use of this assessment with families of substance-dependent individuals (Francis et al., 2003; Georgiou, 2007). Through its symbolism of nurturance and caregiving, the BND can be a unique and valuable tool in eliciting attachment-related themes with ACOAs and providing art therapists with a holistic understanding of an individual's pattern of attachment as influenced by the inconsistent and unpredictable behavior of their alcoholic parent.

Attachment Theory

Attachment theory considers how individuals develop connections and relationships with significant figures. John Bowlby (1965, 1969, 1982, 1988, 1989) is known as an originator of this theory. He believed that all humans share an innate need to create strong affectional bonds distinct from other motivators like food or sex, starting in early childhood with our primary caregivers. Bowlby (1989) defines this affectional bond as a desire to attain or maintain

proximity to another individual who is perceived as better equipped to navigate life. And thus, combining concepts from developmental theorists and object-relation theory, Bowlby (1989) believes that a strong, secure attachment is necessary to facilitate a child's healthy development; one that is predictable, offers safety and comfort, and fosters confidence in the individual's ability to move away from the other knowing that, when reunited, physical and emotional nourishment is available (Ainsworth, 1989; Bowlby, 1988).

Building on Bowlby's (1965, 1969) foundational works, Mary Ainsworth and her colleagues (1970, 1971, 1978, 1989) have significantly influenced the development of attachment theory with their research into the existence of individual attachment styles. Ainsworth and Bell (1970) conducted an observational study of infant-mother interactions by what is known as the *strange-situation procedure*. Behavioral observations revealed that children typically learn to explore their environment within the proximity of the mother or primary caregiver, using her as a launching point from which to move away but also a point of return for comfort and safety (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Bowlby, 1988; Mahler et al., 1985). This concept of using the mother as a "secure base" was introduced by Ainsworth et al. (1978), expanded upon by Mahler et al. (1985) as they explored the *separation-individuation* phase of development, and remains a central feature of attachment development (Bowlby, 1988).

From her studies with infant-mother pairs, Ainsworth and colleagues (1970, 1971, 1978) discovered three primary patterns of attachment: *secure*, *insecure anxious*, and *insecure ambivalent*. Children who perceive their primary caregiver as responsive to their signals and communication, affectionate, and accessible use them as a secure base and can explore unfamiliar environments freely, knowing with certainty that when reunited with their caregiver, there will be reassurance, suggesting a *secure* attachment style (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Bowlby,

1969/1982). Mothers who are observed to be less responsive to proximity- and contact-seeking behaviors are not perceived as accessible by the child, discounting their use as a secure base from which to explore, causing much more intense distress when out of proximity due to an induced fear of abandonment (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Bowlby, 1988). Additionally, much ambivalence is displayed by the child when in close contact with the mother, categorizing this behavior as consistent with an *insecure ambivalent* (also known as anxious and resistant) attachment style (Ainsworth et al., 1978, p. 315; Bowlby, 1969/1982). Similarly, mothers who are observed to be rejecting and aversive to close contact with their child tend to provide unpleasant experiences in the context of physical closeness, resulting in avoidance behavior demonstrated by the child, such as turning away, moving away, or averting gaze to interrupt or discourage any interaction (Ainsworth et al., 1978). This type of behavior has been categorized as an *insecure anxious* (or avoidant) attachment style (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Bowlby, 1969/1982). In all cases, an individual's attachment style has been shown to correlate with their social and cognitive development as they grow beyond infancy, with securely attached individuals at an advantage in these respects (Ainsworth et al., 1978).

Attachment in Adulthood

Although attachment behavior is understood to be more evident during childhood, theorists believe that our attachment behavior can be observed throughout the life cycle (Bowlby, 1989; Ainsworth, 1989). As we grow into adulthood, the regularity and intensity of such behavior steadily diminish, usually most pronounced in certain instances, such as when an attachment figure is ill or in distress (Bowlby, 1989). Following Ainsworth's (1978) references to infants' perceptions of their caregivers' accessibility and responsiveness as a determinant of their attachment styles, Bowlby (1969) discussed the concept of internal working models. This

approach describes the development of mental representations or internalized experiences and memories from early caregiving interactions that guide our future perceptions and behaviors as we create and maintain relationships (Bartholomew & Perlman, 1994; Feeney & Noller, 1996). Considering Bowlby's (1969/1982) theoretical concept, Bartholomew and colleagues (1991, 1994) proposed that our internal working models consider the intersection of two dimensions – the model of self, which concerns whether the self is worthy of love and support, and the model of other, which involves if others are seen as trustworthy and available or unreliable and rejecting. These dimensions' dichotomous nature creates a four-category attachment model that considers a two-axis continuum of anxiety and avoidance, illustrated in Figure 1. A positive sense of self-worth and lovability (low anxiety) combined with a view of others that is generally accepting and responsive (low avoidance) is described as a *secure* pattern of attachment (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). A negative sense of self-worth (high anxiety) or unlovability and a positive view of others (low avoidance) might lead behaviors toward seeking acceptance and validation from others, otherwise labeled as *ambivalent* or *preoccupied* attachment. A negative view of the self (high anxiety) combined with a negative view of others (high avoidance) leads to high avoidance behaviors that are a means of protection from anticipated rejection by others, also labeled as a *fearful-avoidant* attachment style (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). The fourth style combines a positive sense of self-worthiness (low anxiety) and a negative view of others as unworthy of trust (high avoidance), which can be characterized by striving for independence and self-sufficiency and refraining from showing any signs of intimacy or vulnerability, known as a *dismissive-avoidant* style (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).

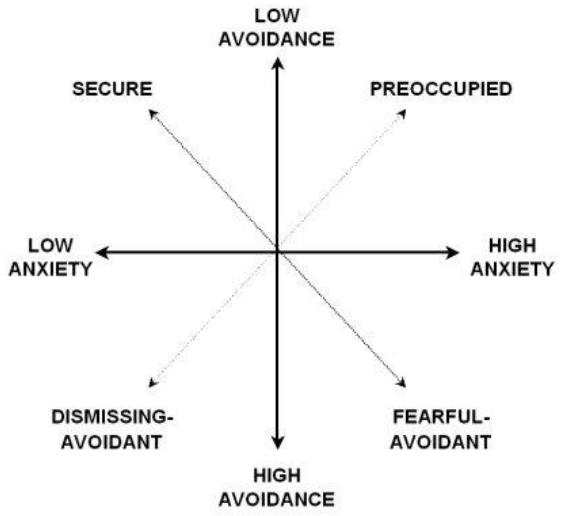

Figure 1. The two-dimensional model of attachment (Fraley et al., 2015).

Working models are understood to have a continuing influence on behavior; thus, attachment patterns established early on in life are thought to remain considerably stable over time (Feeney & Noller, 1996).

A categorical vs. continuous approach. As attachment theory has advanced, researchers have proposed differing views on the stability of attachment styles beyond infancy, debating whether attachment styles in adulthood are most accurately described as categorical or continuous. Categorical models suggest that an individual develops one of three, four, or possibly five attachment styles (secure, anxious/ambivalent, avoidant, fearful, and disorganized) in infancy, and their attachment behavior toward their primary caregiver stems into their behavior towards other significant attachment figures as they move into adolescence and adulthood (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). This model's origins can be traced back to Ainsworth's (1970, 1971) research with infants during the strange situation procedure, where she divided and categorized the infants based on similar recurring patterns of

attachment behavior. This categorical system later influenced measures and assessments of adult attachment.

By applying Bowlby's and Ainsworth's ideas, Hazen and Shaver (1987) investigated how romantic love experiences in adulthood reflected our typal attachment behavior derived from early caregiving experiences. Researchers translated Ainsworth et al.'s (1978) descriptions of infants' attachment styles into terms appropriate for classifying adult love and developed a 95-item questionnaire where respondents would rate how true each statement was for themselves (Hazen & Shaver, 1987). Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) used their four-category model of attachment to adapt Hazen & Shaver's (1987) love quiz into *The Relationship Questionnaire*, which includes a description of each attachment style and requires the respondent to rate how true each statement is for one's own experience and how a person perceives the experience of their friend. Around this same time, Collins and Reed (1990; 1996) challenged Hazan and Shaver's (1987) measure of attachment styles as mutually exclusive by examining the possible relations among types with their 21-item *Adult Attachment Scale* (AAS), which later became the *Revised Adult Attachment Scale* (RAAS). This dimensional view of attachment considered more individual differences among attachment behaviors, which may allow for a more accurate representation of attachment (Fraley et al., 2000). Yet, categorical attachment measures remain considerably utilized and relied upon in quantitative research, possibly due to their simple scoring and strong measurement models (Fraley et al., 2000). In 2015, Fraley, Hudson, Heffernan, and Segal used taxometric methods to compare categorical and two-dimensional attachment models and determine which model most appropriately captured individual differences across various levels of abstraction and relational contexts. The results from this

study favored using a continuous model to conceptualize global attachment representations within specific relational contexts (Fraley et al., 2015).

Parental Alcoholism and Insecure Attachment

Bowlby (1989) notes that those who are anxious, insecure individuals, perceived as over-dependent or immature, have often experienced one or more examples of harmful parenting in which one or both parents are regularly unresponsive to care, inconsistent, threatening, or guilt-inducing. Furthermore, the experience of neglect and any psychological abuse is significantly associated with insecure attachment behaviors in adulthood, such as a higher sensitivity to rejection and fears of abandonment (Kim et al., 2021). A parent's ability to adequately provide nurturance and guidance to developing children is seriously inhibited by addiction (Windle, 1996).

The effects of substances such as alcohol can create inconsistencies and unpredictability in one's parenting behavior, which can cause much confusion for children as their understanding of order, control, and stability within the family environment becomes disrupted (Windle, 1996). More than other family members and loved ones, dependent children seem to suffer the most harm as they can often be subjected to neglect, emotional abuse, and even physical victimization by addicted parents (Lawson & Lawson, 1998; Wood, 1987). Their dependency on their parents, in combination with underdeveloped mental and emotional maturity, makes them susceptible to self-blame for their parents' problems (Wood, 1987). As they mature, these children become afraid that the attachments they create in their adult lives will result in the same emotional pain they experienced as children from their parental relationships. Hence, adult children of alcoholics (ACOAs) will withdraw from and avoid relationships or exhibit such anxiety that they seek approval and reassurance from their partners (Haverfield & Theiss, 2014; Wood, 1987).

Relational issues are not uncommon among children of alcoholics and is one of several consistently found themes that emerge when analyzing the impact of parental alcoholism on one's psychological functioning, emotional functioning, and relationship satisfaction (Beesley & Stoltenberg, 2002; Cork, 1969; Haverfield & Theiss, 2014; Lawson & Lawson, 1998).

Early research on the impact of parental alcoholism was piloted by Cork (1969) in an interview study of 115 children ages 10 to 16 years old who lived with an alcoholic parent. Several important themes emerged from the narratives. For example, the children were quick to become upset, angry, and defiant, and almost all felt rejected or unwanted by their parents. Many of the children from this study reported that their parent's addiction affected their relationships both in and outside of the family (Cork, 1969). A more recent narrative study cited similar themes of low self-esteem and insecurity, anger and resentment, romantic relationship problems, and problems communicating among ACOAs in an online support forum (Haverfield & Theiss, 2014). One consistent theme between Cork's (1969) and Haverfield and Theiss's (2014) research is that children of alcoholics struggle to express and cope with difficult emotions. The problems children of alcoholics have with their emotions likely stem from their interactions with their dependent parents, which affects their relationships later as adults (Haverfield & Theiss, 2014).

Art Therapy and the Use of Projective Art Assessments

Rooted in psychodynamic theory, art therapy frames art as a means of symbolic communication (AATA, 2017; Malchiodi, 1998; Naumburg, 1958). This means that the product of artistic expressions can communicate internal issues, emotions, and conflicts that may be too difficult to convey through words alone (Malchiodi, 1998). Projective drawings have been used in Psychology as clinical tools to understand the internal workings of an individual through graphic indicators and symbolic content (Handler & Thomas, 2013; Naumburg, 1958). Artistic

imagery produced by clients has been found to indicate developmental levels, the use of defense mechanisms, underlying emotional issues, and perceptions of the self to others in ways that are clearer than through verbalization alone (Handler & Thomas, 2013; Kaiser, 1996). Furthermore, for individuals who have experienced psychological or emotional trauma and have difficulty expressing their emotions, like children of alcoholics, projective drawings can serve as a non-threatening and safe way to access important aspects of self. This may be difficult to obtain via self-report or memories and imagery that are deeply embedded in the unconscious (Backos & Samuelson, 2017). For example, family drawings have been used with children as projective tools to identify internal representations of relationships and their early attachment experiences (Backos & Samuelson, 2017; Fury et al., 1997; Madigan et al., 2003; Pace et al., 2022). Indications within family drawings such as exaggerated heads, incomplete figures, and isolation have been found in research to be associated with insecure styles of attachment, whereas securely attached children will generally draw more positive family interactions with more color and positive facial affect (Backos & Samuelson, 2017; Madigan et al., 2003).

Challenges and Limitations of Projective Drawings

Although projective drawings are widely used in psychotherapy settings as valuable tools, their scientific merit remains highly controversial. Based on the subjectiveness of scoring and interpretation, projective drawings have been criticized for their lack of clarity, validity, and reliability (Groth-Marnat & Wright, 2016; Kaplan, 2003; Lilienfeld et al., 2000). Projective drawings require a trained professional to interpret the metaphorical and symbolic content that is emerging through the imagery and cannot be interpreted without some knowledge of the artist, the context in which the drawing was created, and a narrative of the drawing from the artist's perspective (Kaplan, 2003). Furthermore, some researchers have noted how one's artistic ability

or previous artistic experiences might influence their drawings (Handler & Thomas, 2013). Suboptimal designs and constructions of these projective techniques are suspected to be the leading contributing factor to their limitations, as research has disproven that projective techniques are inherently unreliable and that they can indeed achieve an acceptable level of validity and reliability if constructed well with aggregation across multiple items, unambiguity, and by use of an iterative approach (Lilienfeld et al., 2000).

The Bird's Nest Drawing

The Bird's Nest Drawing (BND) is a projective drawing task developed by Kaiser (1996), who was inspired by the research done using family drawings as an art-based assessment with children (Kaiser & Deaver, 2009). The BND was intended to assess an individual's attachment security in a task that was less intimidating than a family drawing but would also elicit attachment-related themes (Kaiser, 1996; Kaiser & Deaver, 2009). Kaiser (1996) proposed that an individual's depiction of a bird's nest may indicate unconscious perceptions of early caregiving experiences related to the security of their attachment patterns based on the belief that a nest can be a symbol of protection and maternalism because of its containment and womblike form. Kaiser's (1996) initial validity study using the Attachment to Mother (ATM) scale of the three-scale Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment showed positive associations between the inclusion of birds and a secure attachment pattern (Kaiser, 1996). In later studies, additional drawing indicators of secure or insecure attachment patterns were identified and have since been compiled into an 11-item checklist (Francis et al., 2003; Kaiser & Deaver, 2009; Goldner, 2014)

Parental Alcoholism in Art

Abstract topics, emotions, or dilemmas can be difficult to express through words alone, as people tend to think both in images *and* words. For individuals who have been taught not to

speak about things within their families, which is often the case for many children of alcoholics, artistic imagery can be a beneficial way to communicate (Backos & Samuelson, 2017; Lawson & Lawson, 1998). Yet, a limited number of studies examining the use of art-based interventions with children of addicted parents have been conducted (Holt & Kaiser, 2001; Leung et al., 2018), illuminating a gap in the research. Leung et al. (2018) evaluated the use of expressive arts interventions in a pretest-posttest design with adolescents and addicted parents. They found evidence to support the use of expressive art approaches in the development of interventions for children of addiction. Research showed positive changes in adolescents' beliefs about addiction and improvements in psychosocial competencies in both adolescents and addicted parents after the implementation of the expressive arts program (Leung et al., 2018). To provide opportunities for prevention and early intervention, Holt and Kaiser (2001) investigated the presence of graphic indicators of familial alcoholism in Kinetic Family Drawings (KFD) from children of alcoholics. They found two indicators to be statistically significant in identifying children who are at risk and are experiencing the effects of familial alcoholism – the depiction of isolation of self and isolation of other members of the family (Holt & Kaiser, 2001). However, other indicators did not attain statistical significance, such as indications of water themes or the inclusion of bottles, cans, or containers (Holt & Kaiser, 2001).

Conclusion

The formation of attachment styles is influenced by early experiences with primary caregivers, often parents, and their behaviors (Ainsworth, 1989; Bowlby, 1989). Attachment security is based on an individual's perception of the accessibility and reliability of their attachment figure (Ainsworth, 1989; Crittenden & Ainsworth, 1989). Alcohol dependency and other addictions can impede a parent's ability to remain accessible, reliable, and consistent for

their child, leading to the development of insecure attachment behaviors in their children (Windle, 1996). As children of alcoholics grow older, the insecure attachment behaviors they learned during early childhood are applied in their adult relationships, which can cause relational difficulties and interpersonal problems (Bowlby, 1989; Beesley & Stoltenberg, 2002; Cork, 1969; Haverfield & Theiss, 2014; Lawson & Lawson, 1998; Wood, 1987). As the widespread nature of alcohol dependency becomes more of a concern, extending the research on ACOAs will be beneficial for mental health professionals to further understand the effects and risks of parental alcoholism and to develop more effective treatments and interventions targeted toward this population.

Projective drawings can be used to discover nuances and reveal a holistic understanding of an individual's internal workings (Handler & Thomas, 2013; Naumburg, 1958). The Bird's Nest Drawing (BND) is a unique projective drawing task that can elicit internalized attachment-related themes in a non-threatening, symbolic way (Kaiser, 1996). With the sensitivity of ACOAs' experiences in consideration, offering them a way to visually portray their unconscious representations of attachment using the BND may be useful in enhancing therapeutic understandings of attachment patterns and gaining insight and recognition that promotes the healing of unhealthy attachment and the creation of positive connections with others. This research aspired to validate the use of art-based projective assessments in the field of art therapy with vulnerable populations, to extend the current body of research on the BND (Kaiser, 1996), and to provide art therapists and other mental health professionals with an additional means through which to identify the impact of growing up in an alcoholic family. The study aimed to investigate the use of the BND as an arts-based assessment tool to predict attachment styles in a population of adult children who have experienced living with an alcoholic parent.

Method

Participants

The present study included 28 participants (24 women, four men) between the ages of 20 and 74 (*M* = 34.21, *SD* = 15.88). Attempts were made to recruit participants from diverse backgrounds residing in the southern region of Connecticut using a combination of convenience and snowball sampling methods through posted flyers (Appendix E) at the researcher's affiliated institution, local churches, and on social media. All participants were identified as children of alcoholics based on a score of at least two or greater on the Children of Alcoholics Screening Test (CAST-6; Hodgins et al., 1993). Concerning self-reported race, 23 participants identified as White, three as Black, and two preferred to self-describe. Regarding ethnicity, four participants identified as Hispanic or LatinX, and 24 identified as non-Hispanic. Regarding relationship status, 7 participants reported being single, 13 reported being in a relationship, six reported being married, one reported being separated/divorced, and one reported being widowed. Regarding living arrangements, 9 participants reported cohabitating with their parents, and 19 reported not cohabitating with their parents.

Instruments

The Children of Alcoholics Screening Test

The Children of Alcoholics Screening Test (CAST-6; Hodgins et al., 1993) is a shortened form of the 30-item Children of Alcoholics Screening Test (CAST; Jones, 1981). The CAST-6 consists of six true or false items designed to identify individuals who have grown up with an alcoholic parent. The items assess individuals' perceptions of their parents' alcohol usage and their attempts to control their parents' alcohol consumption. Although the original cutoff score was believed by Hodgins et al. (1993) to be 3, more recent studies have concluded that a

minimum score of 2 is generally considered indicative of an individual who has grown up in an alcoholic environment (Elgán et al., 2021). The CAST-6 was developed from the original scale using three distinct samples of adults: substance use disorder outpatients (N = 90), psychiatric outpatients (N = 131), and medical students (N = 110). The CAST-6 has shown high internal consistency among all three original samples: the medical students (α = 0.86), the substance abuse treatment outpatients (α = 0.91), and the psychiatric outpatients (α = 0.92; Hodgins et al., 1993). It has also been found to have excellent test-retest reliability over two to three weeks (r = 0.93, p < .001; Elgán et al., 2021). Lastly, it has been shown to have high concurrent validity when compared to the original CAST (r = 0.92 – 0.94, p<.001; Hodgins et al., 1993).

Revised Adult Attachment Scale – Close Relationships Version

The Revised Adult Attachment Scale – Close Relationships Version (RAAS-CRV; Collins, 1996) is a revised version of the original 18-item Adult Attachment Scale (Collins & Read, 1990) in which participants respond to items on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (not at all characteristic of me) to 5 (very characteristic of me). Items measure how individuals generally feel in important close relationships in their lives. Each of the 18 items is assigned categorically using three subscales, the first being the *close* subscale, which measures an individual's degree of comfort with closeness and intimacy; the second is the *depend* subscale, which assesses a person's level of comfortability with trusting and relying on others, and the third being the *anxiety* subscale which measures fear and worry around rejection and abandonment (Collins, 1996). Cronbach's alphas for the close, depend, and anxiety subscales have been found to be .77, .78, and .85, respectively (Collins, 1996). Alternative to a categorical analysis, a more appropriate statistical procedure can be conducted using the continuous attachment dimensions in which the *close* and *depend* dimensions of the RAAS-CRV can be

averaged (and then reverse scored) to form an overall index of attachment-related *avoidance*, and the *anxiety* dimension can be used as an index of attachment-related *anxiety*. The attachment-related *anxiety* index represents one's sense of self-worth and acceptance (versus rejection) by others and is related to working models of the self (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Collins & Feeney, 2004). The attachment-related *avoidance* index refers to the degree to which one approaches (versus avoids) intimacy and interdependence with others and appears to be closely linked to working models of others (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Collins & Feeney, 2004). The scale has been found to have high levels of concurrent validity when correlated to the original version (r = 0.86-0.98, p<.001) in a sample of 296 undergraduate students.

Bird's Nest Drawing

The Bird's Nest Drawing (BND, Kaiser, 1996) is a single-drawing art-based technique grounded in attachment theory, used to assess forms of attachment security representations. For the purposes of this study, the BND was administered as described in Francis et al. (2003). The exception was that rather than crayons, markers, and colored pencils, only a 24-count pack of Crayola® colored pencils was offered. Consistent with the assessment protocol, a single sheet of 9" x 12" (22.86 cm x 30.48 cm) off-white drawing paper, a sharp No. 2 pencil with an eraser, and a sheet of 8-1/2" x 11" (21.59 cm x 27.94 cm) lined paper for a descriptive written story about the BND was presented. Instructions were, "Draw a picture with a bird's nest" (Francis et al., 2003, p. 129). If participants inquired more direction, the researcher informed participants that there was no right or wrong way to complete the drawing. Once participants verbalized that they had finished drawing, they were then instructed to "Write a story about the drawing using two to five sentences" (Francis et al., 2003, p. 128).

The drawings were then rated by four trained raters using a scoring manual based on the existing literature created by the researcher that assesses four distinct variables: *presence and condition of young birds/eggs, presence and behavior of parent birds, construction of the nest,* and *external supports and stability* (Francis et al., 2003; Goldner, 2014; Goldner & Herzig Reingold, 2023). The four graphic indicators were each rated on a scale from 0 to 3, with descriptions for each code based on the given variable and a higher code representing a more secure indication of attachment. Raters were also asked to rate the written narrative on how consistent it was with the drawing, using a dichotomous scale (0= no, 1 = yes).

Procedure

After IRB approval, flyers inviting research participants were distributed and posted through social media, on a southern Connecticut college campus, and at local churches. Once interested participants contacted the researcher, they were sent an e-mail providing clarification on eligibility criteria and an electronic fillable Adobe PDF informed consent form (Appendix A) explaining the study's nature. The informed consent form was signed by participants using Adobe Reader DC, then returned to the researcher, password-protected, and stored on an encrypted external drive. Consenting participants were each assigned a participant ID number, and the ID number key was stored in a secure digital file on the encrypted external drive. Participants were then e-mailed a link to an eligibility screener via Google Form containing the CAST-6 (Hodgins et al., 1993), which was pre-filled with their participant ID number and disabled to collect e-mail addresses and IP addresses based on an existing Business Administration Agreement (BAA). Results of the screening were recorded and filed by ID number in a Google Sheet in the researcher’s secure Google Drive. The researcher then evaluated eligibility for the main study and informed participants through e-mail within 24 hours

of receiving their responses. All data of participants who were ineligible to continue in this study was deleted immediately following this determination.

In the next stage of this study, participants were sent an e-mail to select a date and time to meet with the researcher at a designated location to conduct the final stage of the research. Respondents were automatically sent a Google Calendar invitation for their selected meeting time. At the time of the scheduled meeting, participants were met individually in a quiet room designated for this study. The participants were first welcomed by the researcher and reminded about the nature of the study, along with its risks and benefits. The researcher explained the art release form and provided participants with a copy to sign. Then, participants were asked to complete the demographics questionnaire (Appendix B). Demographic forms were labeled by participant ID number and filed in an envelope and then sealed. Signed art image release forms (Appendix C) were filed separately in another envelope and then sealed.

Next, participants were alternated in which order they received the subsequent two assessments. Every other participant completed the Bird's Nest Drawing art assessment and then the Revised Adult Attachment Scale - Close Relationships Version (RAAS-CRV), while the alternate participant first completed the RAAS-CRV and then the BND.

For the BND procedure, participants were provided a single sheet of 9 x 12-inch (22.86 cm x 30.48 cm) off-white unlined drawing paper and a 24-count of Crayola® colored pencils. Verbal instructions to "Draw a picture with a bird's nest" were given. Once participants verbalized that they had finished drawing, they were given a single sheet of 8.5 x 11-inch (21.59 cm x 27.94 cm) lined paper and a No. 2 pencil and instructed to "Write a story about the drawing using two to five sentences." Upon completing the narrative, the researcher collected the drawing and the narrative and placed them in a sealed envelope labeled with the participant's ID number.

If consent was obtained from the participant, the drawing was scanned and digitally saved using the participant's ID number on an encrypted external drive.

Before completing the RAAS-CRV, participants were reminded not to include their names or any other identifying information on the form. The researcher explained how to complete the form and then offered a printed form to the participant and a No. 2 pencil. The completed RAAS-CRV forms were individually labeled with participant ID numbers and filed in a sealed envelope, separate from the art image releases and artwork.

Finally, a debriefing form (Appendix D) was offered and read to the participant, which contained resources for support. Participants were given the opportunity to ask questions before, during, and after the study.

Four raters blind to the study's hypothesis were selected and trained to rate four graphic indicators: *presence and condition of eggs/young birds*, *presence and behavior of parent birds*, *construction of the nest,* and *external supports and stability* in the twenty-eight drawings collected using the Bird's Nest Drawing Manual. All four raters were art therapy professionals who had between 3 and 8 years of experience in the field. The raters first attended a virtual training session as a group, during which the researcher gave specific guidelines on how to score each variable using the scoring manual. Two sample drawings, submitted by individuals who were not participants in the study, were used by raters during the training to establish agreement. The training session concluded once all raters verbally agreed unanimously on scorings for both sample drawings. Raters were each provided with a scoring sheet (Appendix F) to input their scores for the 28 drawings using the BND manual supplied by the researcher.

To maintain confidentiality, all artwork and documentation related to the study was kept in separate sealed envelopes and stored in locked cabinets of the researcher's office. All digital

files related to the study were stored in separate password-protected folders on an encrypted external drive. ID numbers were assigned to each participant to protect confidentiality. No identifying information was shown to the raters on the artwork.

Results

For the BND graphic indicators, to establish inter-rater reliability, a modification of Cohen's Kappa (1960) was conducted to derive the mean kappa across all conceivable rater pairs (a total of 6 combinations) as suggested by Hallgren (2012) and Light (1971) for three or more raters. The data for the variable of the construction of the nest was not analyzed because it fell below an acceptable score for inter-rater reliability (0.283, fair agreement). The average Kappa results for the inter-rater reliability analyses are displayed in Table 1. Three of the four image variables ranged from 0.443 (moderate agreement) to 0.68 (substantial agreement).

Table 1

Inter-rater Kappa Agreement for Bird's Nest Drawing

BND Image Variable	Average	Kappa Agreement*
Presence and Condition of Eggs/Young Birds	0.615	Substantial Agreement
Presence and Behavior of Parent Birds	0.68	Substantial Agreement
Construction of Nest	0.283	Fair Agreement
External Support/Stability	0.443	Moderate Agreement

**(Cohen, 1960)*

A one-way MANOVA was conducted to determine whether there was a relationship between attachment style dimensions (*anxious, avoidant*) and graphic indicators on the Bird's Nest Drawing (BND): *presence and condition of eggs/young birds, presence and behavior of parent birds,* and *external support/stability.* There is no significant interaction effect of *anxiety*

and *avoidant* attachment dimensions on BND graphic indicators $F(3, 22) = 2.00$, $p = .143$; *Wilk's* $\Lambda = 0.785$, with large effect size (*partial* $\eta 2 = .215$) and low power (.44). Furthermore, the analysis yielded no statistically significant main effect for *anxious* attachment on the three BND graphic indicators $F(3,22) = 0.97$, $p = .425$, *Wilk's* $\Lambda = 0.883$, with medium effect size (*partial* $\eta 2 = .114$) and low power (.23), or for *avoidant* attachment $F(3,22) = 1.10$, $p = .372$, *Wilk's* $\Lambda = 0.870$, with medium effect size (*partial* $\eta 2 = .130$) and low power (.26).

A post hoc power analysis was conducted using G*Power version 3.1.9.7 (Faul et al., 2007) for sample size estimation as a follow-up analysis based on the nonsignificant findings. With a significance criterion of $\alpha = .05$ and power = .80, the minimum sample size needed for an effect size of .0625 is $N = 180$ for a factorial MANOVA (2 groups, 3 dependent variables). Thus, the obtained sample size of $N = 28$ is inadequate to test the study hypothesis.

Discussion

The researcher hypothesized that there would be a significant relationship between the four graphic indicators found in the BND assessment and an insecure attachment style within this sample of adult children of alcoholics. Unfortunately, due to the small sample size and related low power, no statistically significant relationship was found. It should also be noted there were such small numbers of participants in each high/low group for each combination of attachment styles, particularly for those high on anxious and low on avoidant attachment ($n = 2$), that findings are unreliable with respect to being representative of any population.

However, effect sizes do suggest relationships between self-report attachment scores and BND indicators. An examination of the BND means across combinations of *anxious* and *avoidant* attachment (see Figure 1-3) shows some compelling trends that are supported in the artwork, corresponding written narratives, and verbal disclosures from participants during the

completion of the assessments. For example, participants who scored high on the anxiety subscale and low on the avoidant subscale (n = 2) tended to draw more positive parent bird behavior and more positive external support and stability. This attachment style is consistent with existing research that has found significant associations between anxiety-related attachment and childhood neglect in adult populations (Kim et al., 2021). The researchers found psychological abuse and neglect in childhood to also be significantly associated with higher sensitivity to rejection in adulthood. Children of alcoholics often report experiences of psychological abuse and neglect (Haverfield & Theiss, 2014). They have also been found to demonstrate a constant need for approval and affirmation in relationships in adulthood and unflagging loyalty and commitment to people even when such commitment is undeserving (Woititz, 1983; Wood, 1987). Thus, the more positive or secure indications of attachment in the BNDs of this group of ACOAs may be suggestive of their concern for acceptance by others and interdependency through a projection of idealized parent-child relationships.

Figure 4 provides an example of a participant who scored high on the anxiety subscale and low on the avoidance subscale. The drawing indicates positive parenting behaviors but with a somewhat anxious quality, evidenced in the participant's accompanying written narrative, which states that the mother bird "is looking in the sky to make sure nothing is preying on her eggs [and] watches her eggs day and night to make sure they are safe." While the positive parenting behavior in the image fits the rating manual criteria as being present, being within close distance to the nest, and exhibiting caregiving behaviors, the hypervigilant quality of the written narrative is similar to anxious characteristics often observed in ACOAs as a result of negligent parenting (Haverfield & Theiss, 2014; Kim et al., 2021). Therefore, the positive parenting behavior indicated in this image may not be representative of the participant's

perceived parenting style of the alcoholic parent but rather a compensatory response to neglectful parenting reflected in their own anxious attachment style. Additionally, this example illustrates the value of including a written narrative with artmaking to capture nuanced responses.

Figure 5 and Figure 6 display additional trends observed in the artwork. Figure 5 includes examples of BNDs drawn by participants with more secure attachment scores (low anxiety and low avoidance). These images collectively indicate more positive nest construction and external support and stability. In terms of formal elements, the compositions of these images are more well-integrated and more dynamic than those of participants with less secure attachment scores, illustrated by the use of diagonal lines, fluid forms, and soft line quality. BNDs of less securely attached participants (high anxiety and high avoidance), shown in Figure 6, had poorer external support and stability. They also displayed isolative and more poorly integrated elements, more rigid line quality, and heavier pressure than drawings of more securely attached participants.

Figure 7 presents BNDs that demonstrate poor external support and stability. These images include several examples of a floating nest, suggesting instability and vulnerability. Existing research on the BND identifies excluding a tree or other type of support for the nest as an indicator of an insecure attachment style (Francis et al., 2003; Goldner, 2014; Kaiser, 1996).

Figure 8 compares two drawings and their written narratives. The drawing on the left is an example of positive parenting and good external support/stability, indicated both in the drawing and the narrative. The drawing displays a baby bird in the nest and a parent bird flying towards the nest while communicating or chirping, demonstrating positive caregiving behavior. The nest is upright and stable on the tree's branch. The participant's written narrative describes the baby bird as "cozy in her nest" and "excited for him [Dad bird] to come home from work and

for them to spend time together." The participant who wrote this example scored low on the anxious (1.33) and avoidance (1.5) subscales (secure attachment).

The image on the right in Figure 8 illustrates abandonment or neglect by parent birds and poor external support/stability. The nest in this image holds four eggs and is floating on the page. The image is devoid of an environment, and no birds are depicted. The participant's written narrative reads, "The mother went to get food to nourish herself." This statement describes themes of neglect and abandonment that are consistent with the research on parents with alcoholism and reports provided by children of alcoholics (Reich et al., 1988; Windle, 1996). This participant scored moderately high on the anxious (2.33) and avoidant (2.66) subscales (insecure attachment).

Although for this sample of ACOAs there is no statistically significant evidence of a relationship between the graphic indicators in BNDs and attachment style, trends and themes observed in the artwork are consistent with the literature on the effects of parental alcoholism on adult children. Furthermore, trends in the attachment self-report measures as related to the BND scores suggest future research with larger samples will support the use of the three BND graphic indicators (*presence and condition of eggs/young birds*, *presence and behavior of parent birds*, and *external support/stability*) as a measure of attachment security. Research has shown that adult children of alcoholics often report instability within their adult relationships, which has been understood to be based on their childhood experiences with inconsistent and unreliable parenting (Beesley & Stoltenberg, 2002; Cork, 1969; Haverfield & Theiss, 2014; Lawson & Lawson, 1998). The current study found trends of instability and lack of support suggested by graphic indicators in the BNDs of ACOAs. Clinically, the results of the current study may inform best practices for treating ACOAs by focusing on psychoeducation and modeling of

healthy relationships through the therapeutic alliance. Therapists working with this population might consider a Rogerian person-centered approach to psychotherapy (Rogers, 1995). Roger (1995) hypothesized that a genuine therapeutic relationship would allow the individual to reorganize themselves internally, leading them to live a more constructive, intelligent, socialized, and satisfying life, which may be effective in restructuring unhealthy attachment style patterns in ACOAs. Further implications gathered from this current study build on the existing research of the BND as a valuable aid to art therapists in assessing and treating individuals with attachment difficulties and for ascertaining attachment security in ACOAs.

Limitations and Future Research

One limitation of the current study is that the overall sample size was small (N = 28), which may have partly contributed to a lack of statistical power. Additionally, the composition of the sample lacked diversity. Despite efforts made by the researcher to recruit a widely diverse sample, more than half (n = 23) of the participants identified as White, and almost all participants (n = 24) identified as women. Additionally, the researcher of the current study did not add any age constraints when recruiting, which invited a large age range of participants. As humans move through various adult developmental stages of life, they focus on different life tasks, and this may have contributed to a wide range of responses. For example, several participants were aged within the emerging adult stage ages 18 to 29 (n = 17), a developmental stage in which individuals transition from adolescence into adulthood, trying to foster a sense of individuation while still feeling closely tied to parents (Arnett, 2004). This differs from middle adulthood, ages 40 to 65, in the sense that, in midlife, individuals are more concerned with nurturing and promoting younger generations and generating long-lasting impacts, possibly roles as parents themselves or in other leadership positions (Erikson, 1993; Infurna et al., 2020).

Although attachment style is considered to be relatively stable over the lifespan, some researchers have suggested that attachment styles are also likely to be influenced or shaped by significant life events and that a state measure of attachment may be beneficial in capturing any temporary fluctuations in the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors underlying attachment processes (Gillath et al., 2009). Thus, recruiting a wide range of ages invites participants who may be in opposing states of being or different stages of life experience. Future research utilizing the BND to assess attachment style may consider also using a state measure of attachment in addition to one that measures trait-like characteristics for a more accurate representation of adult attachment. Also, a noteworthy number of participants identified as college students (n = 10), and as previous literature has suggested (Sher et al., 1991), college ACOAs may represent a more resilient or higher functioning group of ACOAs in that they may have developed particular qualities that have mitigated some of the maladaptive effects of parental alcoholism, which may have also contributed to the lack of statistically significant results (Beesley & Stoltenberg, 2002).

Next steps for future research should be to replicate this study with a larger sample size ($N \geq 180$) to provide sufficient statistical power and an adequate representation of other covariates such as gender, race, age, and culture. Future research may also consider the extent to which the alcoholic parent impacted the family environment. Participants in the current study were not asked to disclose any personal narratives related to their experience with parental alcoholism, and inclusion was based on a self-reporting measure. Knowledge about the extent to which a child was exposed to parental alcohol use may impact the results of future research.

Conclusion

The present study results showed no statistically significant relationship of the graphic indicators of *presence and condition of eggs/young birds, parent bird presence and behavior,*

and *external support and stability* in the BND with *anxious* or *avoidant* attachment style. However, there were a number of findings that were noteworthy and consistent with the existing literature, in particularly, the recurring theme of instability and abandonment in the sample of drawings by ACOA participants who had scored high on the anxiety subscale. Children of alcoholics remain an overlooked population that is unfortunately commonly left with long-lasting emotional and psychological scars from their experiences of being raised by an alcoholic parent. This research aims to add to the limited research on the use of art-based interventions with children of addicted parents and offer further implications for mental health professionals working with ACOAs to develop effective treatments and interventions.

While projective art assessments continue to be used in clinical settings, their scientific merit continues to be questioned based on their subjectiveness. Through its symbolism of nurturance and caregiving, the Bird's Nest Drawing art-based assessment is well suited to be a unique and valuable tool in eliciting attachment-related themes with ACOAs and providing art therapists with a holistic understanding of an individual's pattern of attachment as influenced by the inconsistent and unpredictable behavior of their alcoholic parent. The present study contributes to the existing research that was established by Kaiser (1996) on the use of the Bird's Nest Drawing; however, a continuation of the research utilizing the BND is still needed to further examine its use as a reliable and valid art-based assessment of attachment. It is the hope of this writer that the results of this study will inspire future validity studies that focus on projective art assessments.

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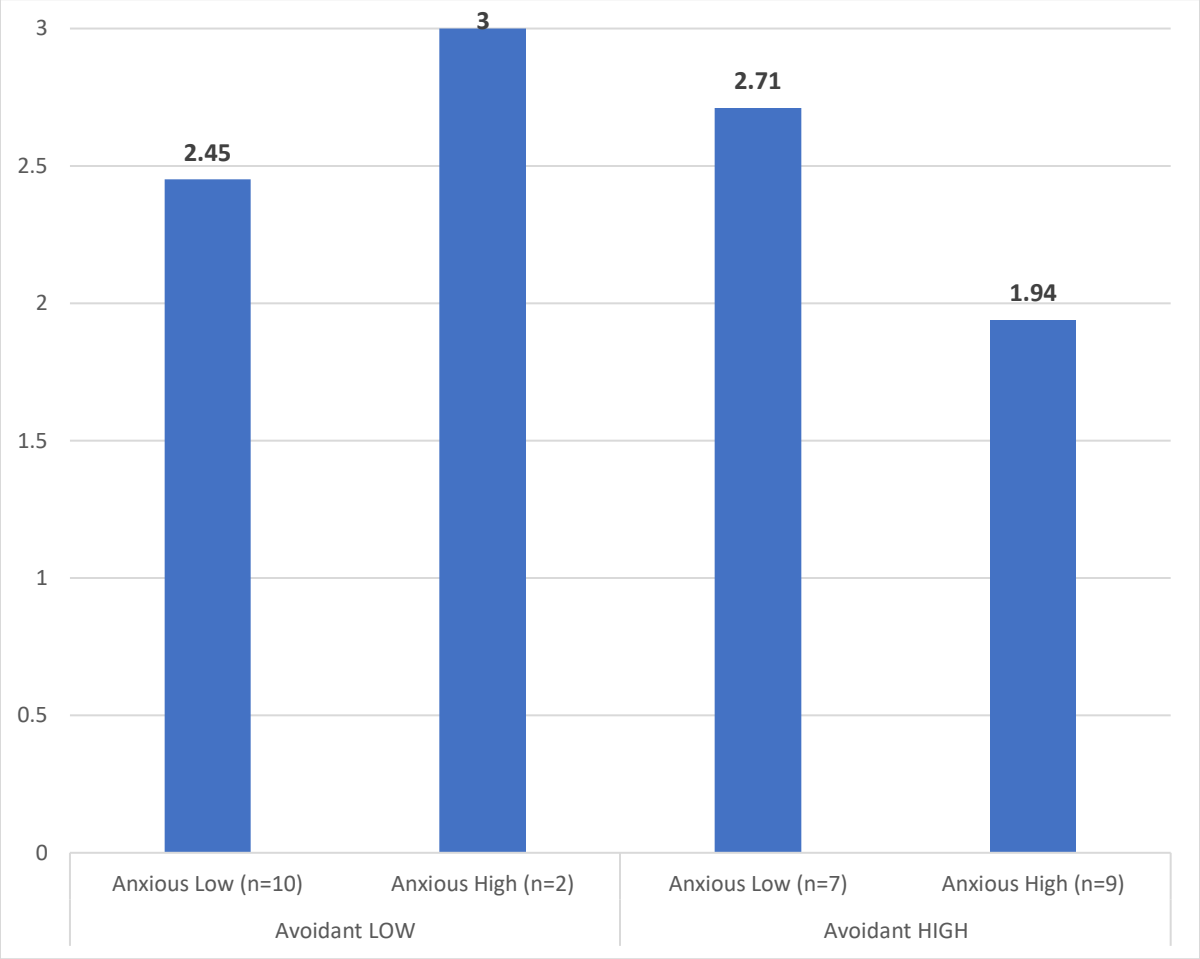
Figure 1

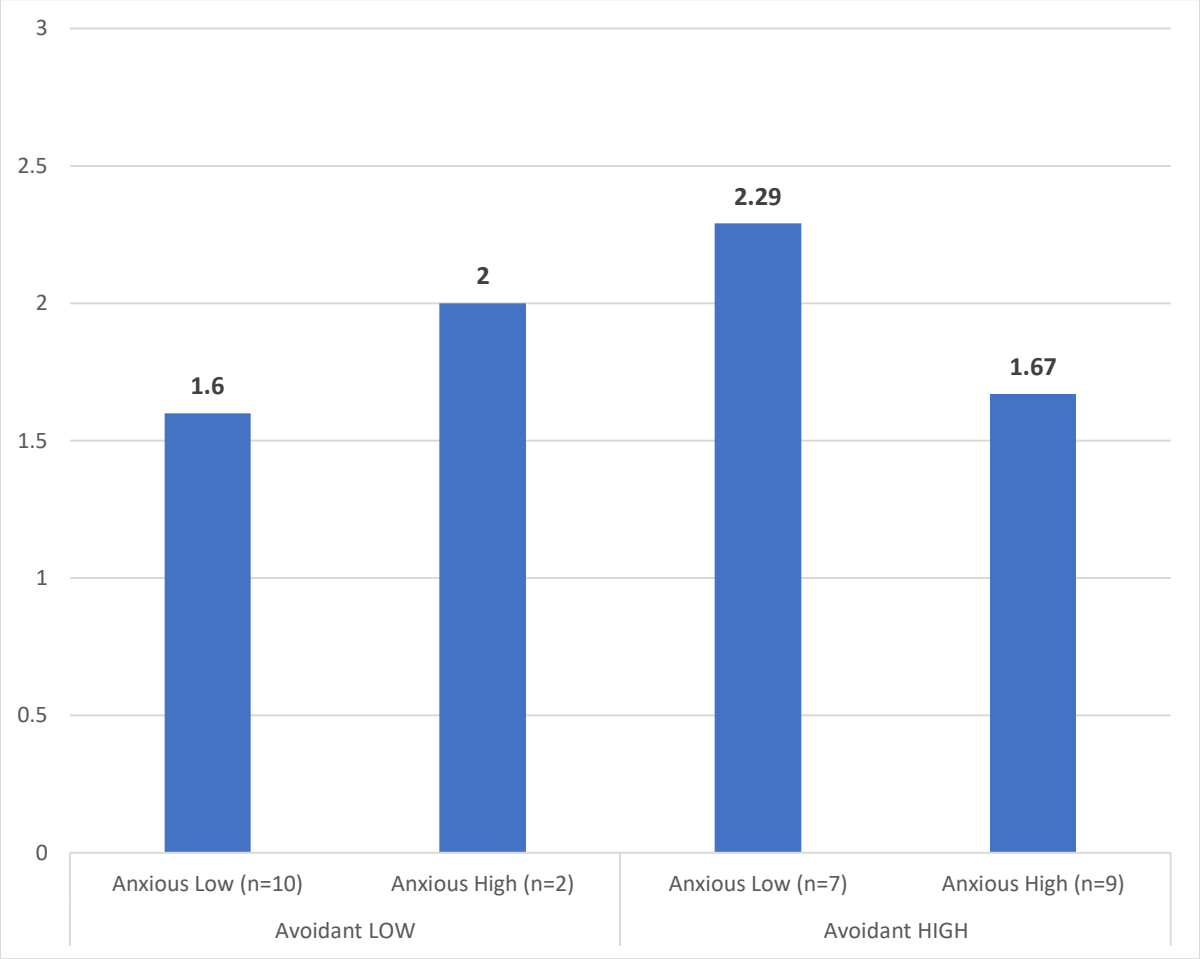
Mean Scores for Presence and Condition of Eggs/Young Birds by Attachment Style



Note. Mean scores for the graphic indicator *presence and condition of eggs/young birds* in the BNDs of this sample of ACOAs are shown for all combinations of low and high anxious or avoidant attachment.

Figure 2

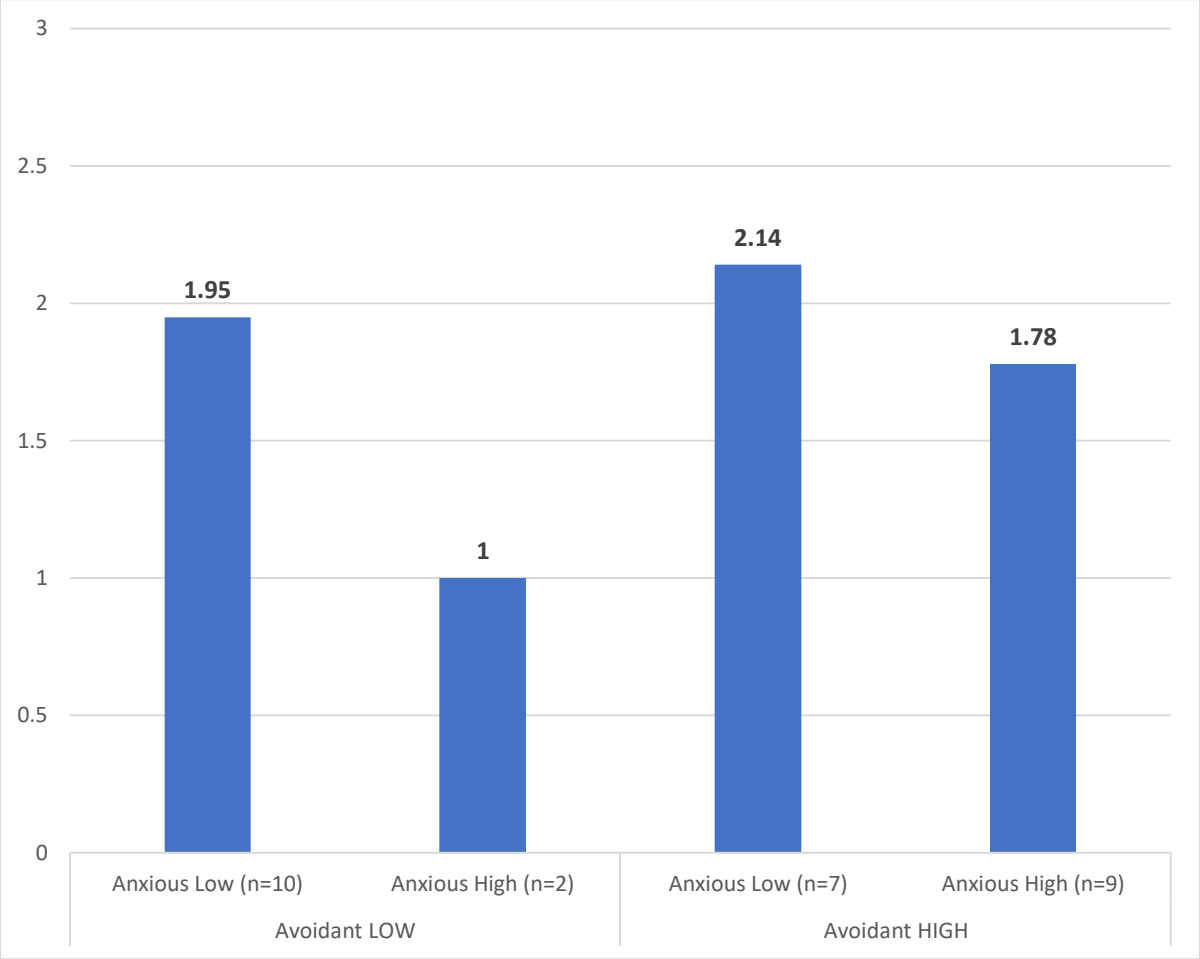
Mean Scores for Presence and Behavior of Parent Birds by Attachment Style



Note. Mean scores for the graphic indicator *presence and behavior of parent birds* in the BNDs of this sample of ACOAs are shown for all combinations of low and high anxious or avoidant attachment.

Figure 3

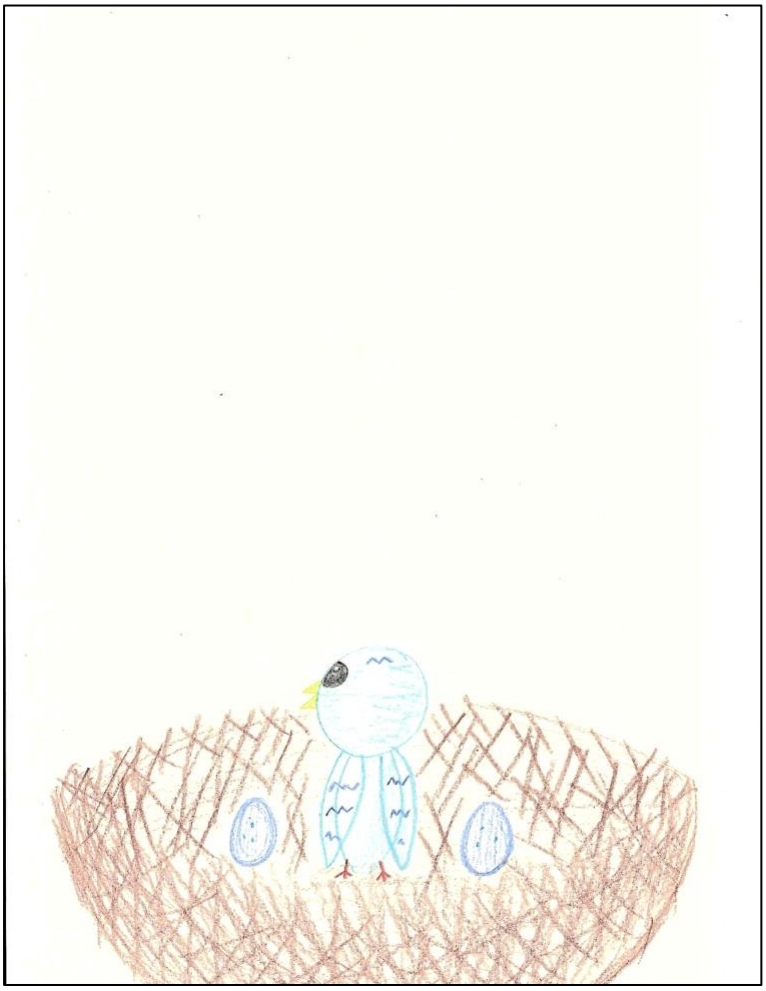
Mean Scores for External Support and Stability by Attachment Style



Note. Mean scores for the graphic indicator *external support and stability* in the BNDs of this sample of ACOAs are shown for all combinations of low and high anxious or avoidant attachment.

Figure 4

Example of Trend in Means of High Anxiety/Lower Avoidance



"There is a blue Mother Bird who is sitting in her freshly made nest with her two eggs. She is looking in the sky to make sure nothing is preying on her eggs. She watches her eggs day and night to make sure they are safe."

Note. The drawing indicates positive parenting behaviors of observation and closeness, but with a somewhat anxious quality evidenced in the participant's accompanying written narrative.

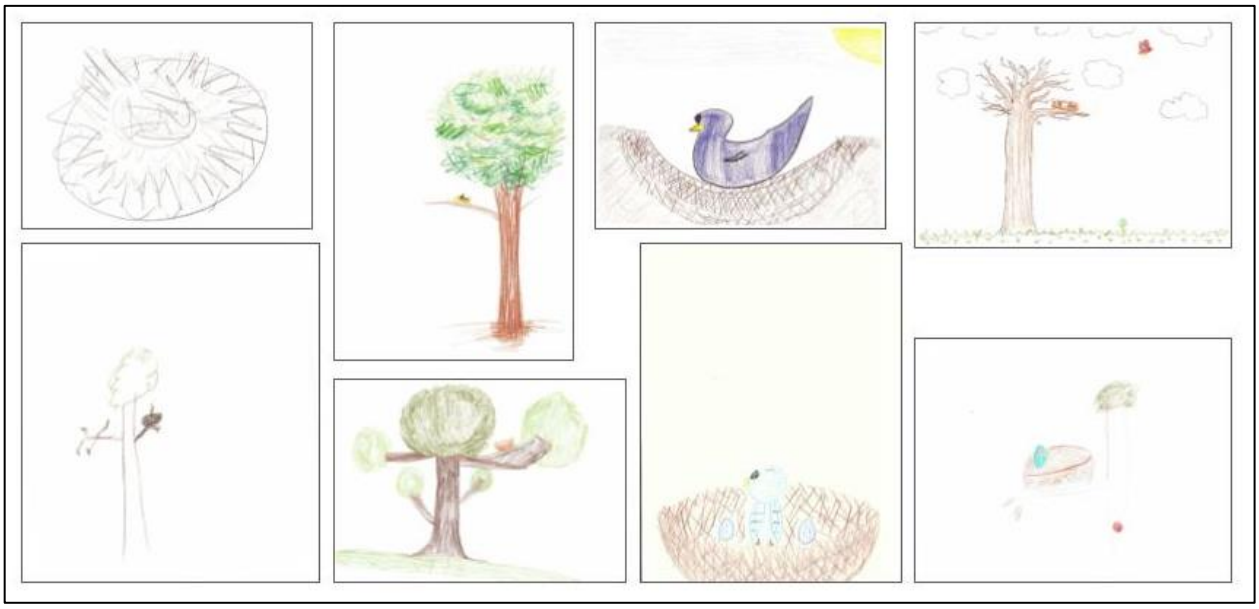
Figure 5

Examples of Drawings by Participants with More Secure Attachment Scores

Note. Drawings by participants who scored lower on both anxious and avoidant subscales indicated stronger nest construction and external support/stability.

Figure 6

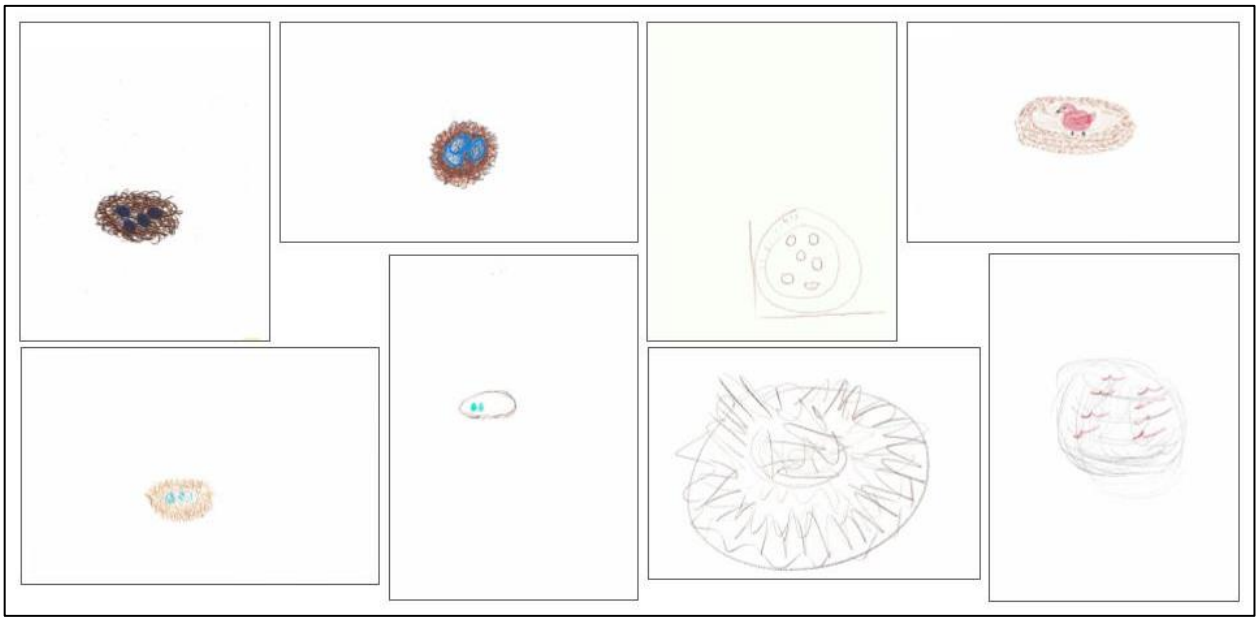
Examples of Drawings by Participants with Less Secure Attachment Scores



Note. Drawings by participants who scored higher on both anxious and avoidant subscales indicated weaker external support/stability.

Figure 7

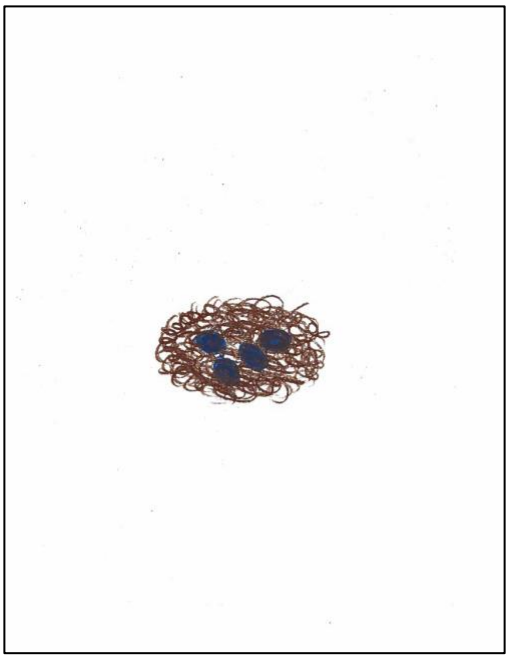
Examples of Drawings Indicating Poor External Support/Stability



Note. These images include several examples of a floating nest, suggesting instability and vulnerability.

Figure 8

Examples of Parenting Behavior and External Support/Stability in BND Sample

Positive parenting and good external support/stability in drawing and story	Abandonment/neglect in drawing and story; Poor external support/stability in drawing
	
"The baby bird is cozy in her nest and is waiting for the Dad bird to come home. Here he is! Baby bird is excited for him to come home from work and for them to spend time together."	"This birds nest has 4 baby eggs. The mother went to get food to nourish herself."

Note. The drawing on the left is an example of positive parenting and good external support/stability, indicated both in the drawing and the narrative. The participant who provided this example scored low on the anxious (1.33) and avoidance (1.5) subscales (secure attachment). The image on the right illustrates abandonment or neglect by parent birds and poor external support/stability. The image is devoid of an environment, and no birds are depicted. The participant who provided this example scored moderately high on the anxious (2.33) and avoidance (2.66) subscales (insecure attachment).

Appendix A

Informed Consent Form

This study is being conducted as part of the requirements for the Master of Arts in Art Therapy and Counseling degree at Albertus Magnus College. The purpose of this study is to investigate an arts-based assessment as a tool in gauging attachment style. To determine eligibility for participation in this study, you will be asked to complete a 6-item survey related to your experience with parental alcohol use, which will take approximately 5 minutes. Based on the results of this survey, you may or may not be asked to continue as a participant in this study. If eligibility is determined, you will be asked to complete a demographic form and partake in a 30-minute in-person session during which you will be directed to complete a drawing as well as an 18-question scale about your close relationships. Please note that your artmaking abilities are not a factor in this study. All information collected will be confidential. To maintain confidentiality, the artwork created during this study will be numbered and your name will not be connected to the work in any way. You will be told in more detail about the purpose of this research at the end of the study.

The researcher does not anticipate any major risks associated with participation in this study. Potential risks involved with participation in this study may include frustration with the artmaking process and possible negative feelings from the scale(s) mentioned above. Benefits of participating in this study session include assisting a graduate student in the completion of her thesis requirement, as well as contributing to research on the use of drawing assessments in art therapy. You may also enjoy the art activity.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose to withdraw from the study at any time and can ask to have your drawing and survey(s) removed from the study. This study has been approved by the Albertus Magnus College Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Please inform the researcher if you have any known allergies to art materials. If you have any questions or concerns about this research, you may contact the following individuals:

Researcher: Francesca Mascola, flmascola@albertus.edu
Art Therapy Advisor: Lisa Furman, Ph.D., ATR-BC, lfurman@albertus.edu
IRB contact: IRB@albertus.edu

By signing this form, I acknowledge that I am 18 years of age or older, understand the study described above, and agree to participate in the aforementioned study.

Print Name Date

Signature

☐ I have received a copy of this form to keep for myself.

Appendix B

Demographic Form

Participant ID #: _____

1. What is your age? _____

2. Which option best represents your race?
   - ☐ Native American Indian or Alaska Native
   - ☐ Asian
   - ☐ Black or African American
   - ☐ Pacific Islander
   - ☐ White
   - ☐ Unknown
   - ☐ Prefer not to answer
   - ☐ Other/Prefer to self-describe:_____
3. Which option best represents your ethnicity?
   - ☐ Hispanic or Latinx or Spanish Origin
   - ☐ Not Hispanic or Latinx or Spanish Origin
4. Which option best represents your current gender identity?
   - ☐ Man
   - ☐ Woman
   - ☐ Non-binary/genderqueer
   - ☐ Not Listed: _____
   - ☐ Prefer not to answer
5. Which option best describes your current relationship status?
   - ☐ Single (never married, not currently dating)
   - ☐ Dating/In a relationship
   - ☐ Married
   - ☐ Separated/Divorced (not currently dating)
   - ☐ Widowed (not currently dating)
   - ☐ Other: _____
   - ☐ Prefer not to answer
6. What are your current living arrangements?
   - ☐ Cohabitating with parent(s)
   - ☐ Not cohabitating with parent(s)
   - ☐ Other: _____

Appendix C

Art Image Release Form
Bird's Nest Drawing

By participating in this research study, you have certain rights that are crucial for you to know and understand. Outlined below is your right to confidentiality, regarding your artwork.

You, as a participant, have a right to confidentiality in this study. This includes the confidentiality of your artwork and any photography of your artwork**.** You are being asked to allow the investigator to photograph your artwork to be used for the research study.

The researcher may use photographed images of your artwork for educational purposes but will only do so if you give permission to have your artwork photographed. Your name, or any identifying information, will be concealed on any photographs taken, and all confidentiality will be maintained. **Artwork created during this study will be collected and kept by the researcher as part of data collection.**

Photographs of your artwork will only be taken with your consent and used beyond this research for the purposes listed below.

Please indicate your agreement to have your artwork photographed without identifying information for the following purpose(s) (Please check all that apply):

- ☐ For educational and training purposes
- ☐ Publication in a professional journal
- ☐ Presentation at a professional conference
- ☐ I DO NOT agree to share images of my artwork shared beyond the research study for the above purposes

I hereby give consent, as noted above, for the use of my photographed artwork.

Name (print)

Signature Date

*You may revoke your permission at any time. Please keep in mind that if you decide to withdraw your consent after agreeing to publication or presentation, it may be difficult to contain information that has already been publicly disseminated. If you wish to no longer give permission to share your images of your work in the future, please contact: Researcher Francesca Mascola at flmascola@albertus.edu.

- ☐ I have received a copy of this form to keep for myself.

Appendix D

Debriefing Form

Thank you for participating in this research study. The purpose of this study was to establish the validity of the Bird's Nest Drawing as an arts-based assessment of attachment style for adult children of alcoholics. Research has shown that children exposed to parental alcoholism often report having relational difficulties as they move into adulthood. The Bird's Nest Drawing indicates markers that are used to understand an individual's attachment styles, or his/her/their way of creating and maintaining close relationships. The questionnaire you were given assesses individual differences in attachment styles using three subscales: (a) the close subscale, which measures the extent to which a person is comfortable with closeness and intimacy; (b) the depend subscale, which assesses the extent to which a person is comfortable depending on others and believes that people can be relied on when needed; and (c) the anxiety subscale, which measures the extent to which a person is worried about being rejected and abandoned by others. The researcher hypothesizes that the Bird's Nest Drawing's graphic indicators will be validated for assessing attachment styles in adult children of alcoholics.

The risks of this study were minimal. Most participants experience a sense of enjoyment from engaging in the art activity. However, some individuals may feel mildly frustrated by the art materials or artmaking process. Most participants enjoy answering questions about themselves; however, some individuals may experience mild negative feelings in response to some of the items in the questionnaire.

If you have experienced anything beyond a mild, transitory negative response, please feel free to discuss these feelings with the researcher.

If you need more support beyond that, please contact one of these local mental health services:

Cornell Scott – Hill Health Center Dixwell at (203) 503-3000

Connecticut Mental Health Center at (203) 974-7300

For support groups for families of alcoholics, contact **CT Al-Anon at 1-888-8AL-ANON (1-888-825-2666)** or find a meeting at **https://www.ctalanon.org/meetings**.

If you are a student at Albertus Magnus College, you may contact the Albertus Magnus College Counseling Center **at (203) 773-8149** or **counseling@albertus.edu**.

If you would like to know the results of this study, please provide your e-mail address to the researcher. Please note that only overall research results can be provided, not individual findings.

If you would like to learn more about art therapy, please visit the American Art Therapy Association at www.arttherapy.org.

For more information about the Bird's Nest Drawing art assessment:

Kaiser, D. (1996). Indicators of attachment security in a drawing task. *The Arts In Psychotherapy, 23*(4), 333-340.

Appendix E

Recruitment Flyer

ALBERTUS MAGNUS COLLEGE
MASTER OF ARTS IN ART THERAPY AND COUNSELING PROGRAM

SEEKING PARTICIPANTS FOR RESEARCH

THIS RESEARCH STUDY CONCERNS ART AND ADULT RELATIONSHIPS

NO ART SKILL REQUIRED!

TO PARTICIPATE, YOU MUST:

A.) BE AT LEAST 18 YEARS OLD
B.) HAVE SOME EXPERIENCE WITH PARENTAL ALCOHOL USE

TAKE THE ONLINE SCREENER TO SEE IF YOU'RE ELIGIBLE!

YOU WILL BE ASKED TO:

1. COMPLETE A BRIEF ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE
2. ENGAGE IN A 30-MINUTE, ONE-TIME, INDIVIDUAL ART ACTIVITY
3. FILL OUT A SHORT SURVEY AFTER MAKING SOME ART

TO SIGN UP FOR THIS RESEARCH STUDY OR FOR MORE INFORMATION, **PLEASE CONTACT THE INVESTIGATOR, FRANCESCA MASCOLA, (FLMASCOLA@ALBERTUS.EDU)** BY SCANNING THE QR CODE HERE →

THIS RESEARCH IS CONDUCTED AS A REQUIREMENT OF A GRADUATE STUDIES PROGRAM AND WILL TAKE PLACE AT:
ALBERTUS MAGNUS COLLEGE
700 PROSPECT STREET, NEW HAVEN, CT 06511

STUDY IRB#: 202324-009

Appendix F

Rating Sheet

Image ID #	Item #1 - Presence and Condition of Eggs/Young Birds	Item #2 - Presence and Behavior of Parent Birds	Item #3 - Construction of Nest	Item #4 - External Support and Stability of the Nest	Item #5 - Written Narrative
	Are young birds present and healthy?	Are parent birds present and attentive?	Is nest well-constructed?	Is the nest well-supported?	Is written narrative consistent with image?
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